DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 165 TM 034 455

AUTHOR Bulkley, Katrina

TITLE Balancing Act: Educational Management Organizations and Charter School Autonomy.

SPONS AGENCY National Inst. on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management (ED/OERI), Washington, DC.; Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

PUB DATE 2002-04-00

NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).

CONTRACT R308A60003

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Charter Schools; *Decentralization; *Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; *Institutional Autonomy; Interviews; Professional Autonomy

IDENTIFIERS *Educational Management Organizations

ABSTRACT

This study examined the ways in which for-profit comprehensive management educational management organizations (EMOs) operating charter schools respond to the need to balance school autonomy and flexibility with the fact that centralized operations require consistency, coordination, and legal constraints. The study focused on the perspective of EMO central office staff to explore the balance between central control and local autonomy. The study first examined research and EMOs and privatization and then considered the notion of school autonomy. Representatives of 15 EMOs were interviewed for this study, and autonomy was analyzed. Findings show that the ability of stakeholders in an individual charter school to make decisions about operations in that school varies greatly across a host of issues, including components of the educational program, governance, organization, hiring practices, and fiscal issues. From the perspective of EMO central office staff, specifics of school autonomy very considerably between companies, even among EMOs that call into the category of "comprehensive management." Company staff view the removal of some autonomy as critical to developing quality charter schools and, often, to maintaining fidelity to EMO ideals. (Contains 37 references.) (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

TM

ED 469 165

Balancing Act:

Educational Management Organizations and Charter School Autonomy[1]

Katrina Bulkley

Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. Bulkley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Paper prepared for the AERA Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002. Do not cite without permission of author.

---

[1] Funding for this research was provided by the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking and Management (Grant #OERI-R308A60003). The opinions expressed in this research are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking and Management, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the United States Department of Education or the institutional partners of CPRE. The author would like to thank Jennifer Fisler, Richard Birdsall and Elisabeth Gordon for their valuable assistance in this project.

TM034455

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> All things considered, you can go from one school to the next and essentially see the same type of program in place…A teacher from one of those schools [in another state] could come to one of our schools here and still, you know, be able to function quite well.
>
> - *EMO representative*

> What we did is we stressed to all of our people that we give them the car. We give the destination, with the parameters… we don't choose the road for them.
>
> - *EMO representative*

> What we can do, if need be, we can go in and assist a school in developing their own curriculum for a particular discipline… There is really no area that we can't assist them in, but again, we sit back and wait until we are asked to do it as opposed to imposing it.
>
> - *EMO representative*

Introduction

Over the last decade, charter schools have flourished nationally, growing to around 2,400 schools in 37 states and the District of Columbia (www.edreform.com). One of the most intriguing – and controversial – aspects of the growth of charter schools has been the increasing involvement of both for-profit and non-profit companies, often called education management organizations (or EMOs), that take responsibility for a wide range of school-related activities. This paper focuses on for-profit EMOs; one recent estimate was that these companies manage about 15-20% of charter schools (Molnar, 2001).[2] While the growth and potential impact of EMOs has been noted in the media and education magazines (Dykgraaf & Lewis, 1998; Furtwengler, 1998; Schnaiberg, 1999; Symonds, Palmer, Lindorff, & McCann, 2000), there has been remarkably little research on this new phenomenon (Rhim, 1998; Scott, 2001).

Charter schools are semi-autonomous public schools that are granted a charter contract from a public entity (i.e., a local school district, state board of education, or public university).

This contract allows them to operate for a specific number of years while receiving public funding; they must have their contract renewed in order to continue to operate as public schools. Charter schools can be operated directly by their own school board or through contracts their boards make with non-profit or for-profit EMOs. In theory, charter schools receive more autonomy from government than do traditional district-run schools in exchange for being more accountable (through the market and their charter contract) for demonstrating educational performance (Kolderie, 1990).

The link between EMOs and charter schools creates a new experiment in hybridizing public and private forces to provide education and has significant implications for public education more broadly and for the role of government in funding versus providing education (Hill, Pierce, & Guthrie, 1997; Lyons, 1995). The use of EMOs appears likely to increase over the next few years; as one report put it, "The education management industry is in its infancy, but clearly growing" (Arsen et al., 1999, p. 54). The dearth of research on EMOs means that policymakers have little good information about EMO approaches to core issues including the role of school stakeholders. Without good, systematic, and comparative research, policymakers are often left to make decisions by relying on anecdotal information and opinion pieces.

Autonomy at the school-site was one of the core concepts underlying the charter school idea (c.f. Nathan, 1996); according to Horn and Miron, "While charter schools are intended to have their own boards with decisions made locally, the growing involvement of EMOs has had an impact on the level of local control" (Horn & Miron, 2000, p. 48). Thus, the emergence of

---

2 In some states, this percentage is likely much higher – for example, in Michigan, where about 70% of schools contracted for some level of service from either a for-profit or non-profit EMO (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999; Horn & Miron, 2000).

EMOs has raised a new set of questions about autonomy and charter schools, including *over what areas* of decision-making school-site personnel have control.

The quotes above demonstrate the variety of views that EMO central office staff express about the role of the individual school in decision-making. After examining research on site-based management, Jane David asked, "How can site-based management be structured to balance school autonomy and flexibility with certain centralized operations that require consistency, coordination, and legal constraints?" (David, 1995, p. 9). This study explores ways in which for-profit comprehensive management EMOs (defined below) are responding to this same issue in structuring their relationships with schools they operate. Specifically, it examines, from the perspective of EMO central office staff, how comprehensive EMOs are balancing the need for central control with local autonomy in the areas of the educational framework (mission, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and professional development), school structure, fiscal issues (including budgeting and facilities acquisition) and hiring/selection practices.

This is *not* a study that distinguishes between "corporate control" and "school control." Determining exactly what is controlled by an EMO can be extremely difficult in schools where the staff and principal are often employed, hired, or selected by EMO central office staff and reporting relationships are often complex. As is the case with districts, the schools they operate are a part of the larger entity, not separate from it. Instead, this study examines how EMO central office staff perceive their own company's attempts to balance decision-making at the school with decision-making outside the school. It is important to note that this paper distinguishes between central staff and school personnel decisions, even though teachers or a school leader may be employed by the EMO.

This paper first examines research on EMOs and privatization, and then looks at the notion of school autonomy. Because few researchers have looked at issues of autonomy and EMOs, this section draws on literature on site-based management (SBM) to inform the discussion of school-based autonomy. The next section offers a brief description of the 15 companies interviewed for this study, followed by an analysis of autonomy in the areas listed above. In conclusion, the implications of the varying approaches to autonomy adopted by EMOs, and the need for further work in this area, are considered.

Literature Review

Educational Management Organizations and Charter Schools

Development of charter school legislation has been accompanied by a growing interest among policymakers and business people in increasing the role of the for-profit sector in the provision of education. Attention to options such as EMOs has increased as the American public has become disenchanted with other efforts to improve public education; according to one report, "Public interest in contracting clearly reflects Americans' desperation about fixing schools now. Many are demoralized that the rash of school reform efforts launched over the last decade has failed to turn the tide" (Richards, Sawicky, & Shore, 1996, p. 49).

Charter schools have proven appealing to entrepreneurs interested in operating schools, including some who are wary of contracting directly with school districts. The charter school movement provides an ideal alternative for education management companies to gain contracts to operate publicly funded schools in a context where the company has greater autonomy than in the district-run sector. As one report noted, "The legal structure of public education presents numerous stumbling blocks to schools that want to consider private management... Charter

school legislation removes some obstacles to more diverse participation in managing publicly financed schools" (Richards et al., 1996, p. 52). From the perspective of charter advocates, EMO interest in operating charters can increase the supply of schools – and thus competition – and bring new investors into public education.

From an economic standpoint, the principal rationale for privatization is that the private sector can produce more efficiently than the public sector and, thus, either reduce costs or offer more "product" for the same cost (Pack, 1987; Starr, 1989). Because the private sector is motivated by competition and rewarded with profits, there are incentives for efficiency that do not exist amidst the bureaucracy and regulation of the public sector. Proponents of privatization intend to bring greater efficiency and innovation to public services as firms produce in the most cost-efficient way in order to gain and keep contracts. One proponent argued that "the education marketplace desperately needs more competition" and that it will "improve instruction by rewarding providers that perform well and weeding out those that don't" (quoted in Walsh, 1999).

EMOs can offer a variety of services to charter schools, including limited services in specific areas, such as bookkeeping and reporting, payroll, special education, and personnel. However, this paper focuses on those that provide comprehensive services. Lin and Hassel define comprehensive management companies as those that offer "'soup-to-nuts' educational programming and management for schools" (Lin & Hassel, 1999). Such companies are also called "full service operators" (Horn & Miron, 2000).

The little that has been written on EMOs consists predominantly of opinion/editorial pieces (i.e. Furtwengler, 1998) and brief mentions in more sweeping reports (Arsen et al., 1999; Hill et al., 2001). A few case studies provide important information about a small number of

EMO-operated schools, but these focus on rich and deep detail for a few select schools rather than broad information (c.f. Rhim, 1998; Scott, 2001).

Charter schools and autonomy

The original charter school idea focused on small groups of teachers, parents, and/or community members creating schools that would serve localized needs and purposes and be highly responsive to the school's stakeholders (Budde, 1989; Nathan, 1996). According to Joe Nathan, one of the founders of the charter school idea, "Charter school advocates agree with the rationale for site-management – that critical decisions about budget, personnel, curriculum and instruction should be made by people at the local school site" (Nathan, 1996, p. 9).

As EMOs have become more engaged, the role of local stakeholders has become less clear. EMOs must deal with tensions between their needs for efficiency, control, and some level of "brand name" consistency and the wishes of members of the school community. The presence of EMOs may have important implications for autonomy at the school site, as schools exchange less site-based control for the potential financial, technical and educational benefits of corporate support. A number of schools in a Michigan study, "expressed concern with the management companies, primarily due to the issue of control over the curriculum and focus of the school" (Horn & Miron, 2000, p. 47)

But just what is "autonomy"? Wohlstetter and her colleagues, drawing on Lakoff's work, define it as the "independence and self-determination of a community in its external and internal relations" (Wohlstetter, Wenning, & Briggs, 1995, p. 338). They also discuss autonomy as involving self-management by schools. In general, autonomy through this lens encompasses the ability of individual schools – within boundaries determined by government – to make decisions that effect both internal operations and external relationships. Wohlstetter, Wenning and Briggs

present evidence that boundaries created by state laws can narrow or broaden the autonomy of charter schools (Wohlstetter et al., 1995).

Charter school advocates have generally considered more autonomy to be better (c.f. Kolderie, 1990), but the research is not completely clear on this matter. One study found, for example, that schools with greater autonomy from their districts were better able to create and sustain a learning community and respond quickly to problems, but were more consumed by managerial decisions (Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1998). Another study suggested that, despite their desire for autonomy, charter schools often turn to their district's bureaucracy when they need help (Wells & others, 1998). Some schools, particularly those with weak organizational structures may have more difficulty capitalizing on their autonomy (Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1998).

Discussions of autonomy for charter schools have generally centered on autonomy from government (c.f. Wohlstetter et al., 1995). This paper, however, focuses on autonomy of the school in relation to EMO central offices. Research on site-based management has explored, at length, the forms of autonomy schools have and how they use it. Generally speaking, the argument for SBM has centered on the idea that, "participation in school decisionmaking can enhance teachers' commitment, expertise and effectiveness" (Marks & Louis, 1997, p. 246), resulting in more effective and efficient schools. According to a review of research on SBM schools, "Successful SBM schools share decision-making authority in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel, and they use that authority to create meaningful changes in teaching and learning" (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 1999, p. 8).

Another way that research on SBM can inform examination of EMOs is through increased understanding of the role of districts in such a reform. EMO central offices and school

districts have some striking similarities – both operate public schools, and often manage many of the same functions, from payroll services to providing an educational direction for schools. Both determine the appropriate level – and areas – for school and central control. With SBM, Wohlstetter and her colleagues found that it is important to, "refocus the central office to enable and support school-level reform efforts" (Wohlstetter, Mohrman, & Robertson, 1997, p. 220). Specifically, they argued that, "Where SBM worked and schools were using their power to improve teaching and learning, central offices had become more service-oriented and less mandate-minded" (Wohlstetter et al., 1997, p. 220). Yet, as Jane David argues, site-based management does not mean that all decisions are appropriately made at the school level. "Schools belong to larger systems – districts and states – that must provide a strong center if decentralization is to create something other than anarchy" (David, 1995).

On the other hand, there are critical differences between EMO central offices and districts in their structures, constituencies, and goals. One example is that school districts report to democratically elected school boards, while EMOs report to boards that may have been selected – at least in part – by the EMO itself. Another example is that districts are based on geographic boundaries, while EMOs may operate schools that are thousands of miles from each other.

While the analogy to SBM holds in some areas – including that charter schools are usually autonomous from districts in areas such as hiring and budgeting (SRI International, 2000) – it is not a perfect match. The charter schools movement is a reform that is primarily about governance (Arsen et al., 1999) and providing an alternative to the traditional district-run school, but research on site-based management has often focused on schools operated by districts (although some researchers, i.e. Newmann, 1996, have included charter schools in their studies). Like charter schools, the rationale behind SBM has often been "part of a larger reform agenda

that claims to trade school autonomy for accountability to the state" (David, 1995, p. 6). However, charter schools are accountable to the market as well as to the state (Nathan, 1996).[3]

Four areas of autonomy

Decentralization, including providing additional autonomy to school buildings, has been a part of a variety of reforms over the last twenty years, including charter schools and site-based management. However, the specific areas in which additional autonomy has been offered to schools has varied, and some researchers have suggested that it is important to explore not simply how much control schools have, but where they have control. Richard Elmore argues that "the central policy question should not be whether to centralize or decentralize authority, but rather what should be loosely controlled from any given level of government and what should be tightly controlled" (Elmore, 1993, p. 51).

EMOs have adopted a variety of approaches to balancing school autonomy with company vision in each of four main areas of autonomy: the educational framework (including mission, curriculum, assessment, professional development, and instructional practices); fiscal policies; personnel hiring; and school governance. These are frequently discussed in the literature on site-based management and autonomy.

Educational framework

EMOs that operate charter schools must decide how to approach educational issues. One decision involves whether or not to have a common educational mission or vision for schools operated by the company. Research on SBM suggests that it is important for schools to "Create

---

[3] For a discussion of some of the challenges to the theory of charter school accountability to government, see

a shared school vision focused on boosting student achievement that guides school-level reform efforts" (Wohlstetter et al., 1997, p. 216). However, a shared mission and a shared educational framework are not synonymous; several schools could share a mission but implement it with different "specifics" (i.e. curriculum, materials and instructional practices), or could share some of these in pursuit of at least moderately different missions.

Through her work on SBM, David found that, "Schools need a substantive framework within which to make appropriate choices... The goal of site-based management is not to let a thousand flowers bloom nor to force every school to reinvent itself from scratch" (David, 1995, p. 8). For EMOs, there are a number of different ways to provide schools with a "framework," and the choices made about what to include in the framework have important implications for the autonomy, or amount of "choices," that school stakeholders are able to make. One part of this framework may be a shared curriculum, either for some or all of the subjects taught in the school. Another part involves assessment; while many states require schools (including charter schools) to participate in state-level assessments, EMO educational frameworks can also include other assessments, including placement exams and lesson-based classroom assessments. A final aspect of an educational framework may be particular ideas about the pedagogy that teachers should use to be consistent with the mission and curriculum of the framework.

Implementing any combination of curriculum, assessments and instructional techniques requires some level of professional development, which might include a summer program, inservice workshops, and in-class support. According to Wohlstetter and her colleagues, schools that successfully use site-based management, "Invest in ongoing and systematic professional

---

(Bulkley, 2001).

development to strengthen both individual and organizational capacity to achieve reform" (Wohlstetter et al., 1997, p. 210). In addition, such schools, "strategically linked professional development to the school's reform agenda" (Wohlstetter et al., 1997, p. 211).

School governance

While not explicitly "educational," the structure of a school can help to support an educational framework. Literature on SBM has focused on autonomy in budgeting, personnel, and curriculum and instruction. However, schools also vary in their ability to determine, within the school building, how governance will be structured and the role or influence that particular actors may have. Research on SBM demonstrates that authority may be located within a school building in a variety of ways, with different stakeholders – including the principal, teachers, parents and community members, and students – playing different "roles." Studies suggest that the ways these actors participate have important implications for school success (c.f. Weiss & Cambone, 1994; Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

For charter schools, school-based decision-making includes not only school staff, parents and, in some cases, students, but also the school's board of directors. Thus, while SBM schools operating within school districts may seek additional autonomy from their school board, charter schools have a more complex relationship regarding autonomy and their boards.

Fiscal autonomy

Fiscal autonomy incorporates school site control over budgeting decisions (including how many and what type of staff to hire) and facilities. Control over budgets is often considered a key component for SBM schools (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 1999). Charter schools, in theory, have primarily school-based budgets. While they must follow accounting guidelines from states (and

sometimes districts), they are expected to have considerable flexibility in their spending patterns. But in SBM schools, district-driven finance systems often guide budgeting in ways that limit flexibility for individual schools (Wohlstetter et al., 1997), and EMOs may act similarly.

Obtaining appropriate facilities is often cited as one of the most significant obstacles in the "start-up" of charter schools (RPP International, 2000). This is an area where EMOs can offer some assistance by providing capital or financing opportunities not readily available to individual schools (Horn & Miron, 2000).

Personnel

Control over personnel decisions – including the selection of staff – is often pointed to as an essential form of school autonomy. Citing Odden and Busch, Briggs and Wohlstetter argue that, "SBM was more successful when schools used their decision-making authority to recruit and select staff who supported and agreed with the school's vision" (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 1999, p. 8). Companies that contract with schools recognize this: "Almost all contracts provide contractors with some kind of control over personnel. Contractors apparently believe they can yield higher performance if they control the selection, training, and assignment of personnel, particularly teaching personnel" (Hannaway, 1999, p. 7).

The selection of a school leader is also a critical hiring decision for a charter school, since leadership appropriate to a school's mission can be crucial to a school's success. Some SBM schools have councils that select or help select the principal, while others have a formal leader selected by the district (David, 1995). For EMO-operated charter schools, selection of the school leader involves some combination of school stakeholders (staff, parents and students), the school's board, and the EMO central office.

Research on site-based management also suggests that innovative compensation practices may support restructuring. Wohlstetter and her colleagues argue that schools and districts interested in SBM should "design an incentive system that motivates involvement in the reform process and rewards school-level participants for improving their expertise and for producing results, especially student success" (Wohlstetter et al., 1997. P. 214)

Methodology

Company List

This exploratory study draws primarily on perspectives of one key set of actors involved in charter schools operated by educational management organizations – the staff of EMO central offices. Later work will explore how these perspectives relate to those of staff, parents and board members working in these schools.

A significant challenge for this study was developing a list of for-profit EMOs that offered "comprehensive management" services (defined as companies that work with all aspects of a charter school's program, including staffing, budgeting, and the educational framework) and that worked with at least three charter schools. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that these companies vary, particularly regarding their approach to a school's educational framework, the aspects they seek to control and the level of specificity within those areas.

In order to develop the list, we contacted representatives of state charter school associations and state departments of education in every state with a charter school law and requested names of companies corresponding to our definition. The resulting list was then combined with one generated by the Center for Educational Research and Analysis at the University of Wisconsin (Molnar, Morales, & Wyst, 2000) and reviewed by several people

working in organizations that have closely followed the growth of EMOs. When each company was contacted, the description of comprehensive management was offered, and the representative was asked if the company's services fit this description. In several cases, companies were removed from the list after they offered a clear explanation for how they did not fit the description.

Two special challenges emerged in generating the list. The first involved Arizona, where for-profit companies can obtain charters directly and, thus, do not manage charter schools for a third party. These companies were not included unless they also operated schools in other states. The second challenge involved two cases where one company purchased another during the course of the data collection (Edison Schools purchased LearnNow, and Mosaica Education purchased Advantage Schools). Since these four companies were each distinct entities at the beginning of the study, we treated them as four separate organizations for data collection and analysis purposes. The final list included 21 companies that comprehensively manage 309 schools serving over 125,000 students in 20 states and the District of Columbia.

Data Collection and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine the universe of companies that fit the guidelines described above. Thus, the goal of data collection was to conduct interviews with as many company representatives as possible. Letters, phone calls, e-mails and personal contacts were used in seeking to arrange interviews with representatives from each of the 21 companies (general descriptions of the companies are provided below). Gaining access to company personnel was a significant challenge, as many companies are wary of speaking with researchers amid concerns about their own work, or their industry, being portrayed negatively. At each EMO, we asked to speak with someone at the central office who had sufficient breadth of

knowledge about company operations to answer a broad range of questions; in most cases, this was somebody near the top of the organization's management structure or the head of the organization.

In total, we conducted telephone interviews with representatives of 15 companies (71% of the total of 21) that manage 276 schools (89% of the total of 309). The response rate for companies operating relatively large numbers of charter schools (21 or more schools) was better (6 out of 6 companies, or 100%) than for those operating small numbers (3-10 schools, response rate of 58%, or 7 out of 12 companies) or medium-sized numbers of schools (11-20 schools, response rate of 67%, or 2 out of 3 companies). Interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide (Patton, 1990), and focused on four areas: general information about the company's structure, history, and work with charter schools; roles of the central office and school staff in decision-making; descriptions of the educational program; and experiences of the company with accountability issues and variations across authorizers and states. Interviews were conducted between May and October of 2001. When needed, brief follow-up interviews were conducted with respondents or other company central office staff. The primary interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes and averaged 75 minutes.

All interviews were taped and transcribed, and transcriptions were coded thematically using Nudist qualitative data analysis software (Miles and Huberman, 1984). This coding was then used to analyze each area of autonomy and generate ratings in different areas of autonomy (see Tables 1 and 2).[4] Appendix A lists the codes used to generate the ratings. Ratings were originally done by a researcher who did not conduct interviews, than reviewed by the author.

Uncertainty about ratings was resolved by re-contacting the company representative or examining company Web sites.

Company websites were reviewed and information was organized around the primary research questions (14 of the 21 companies had websites that were used for this purpose). The websites proved most useful for general information about the company (size, states in which schools are operated, etc.), and the company's educational approach, including mission and curriculum. Web sites and other documents were used to supplement information from interviews and to verify representatives' statements about the company. These documents and websites are not explicitly used in the analysis to protect the confidentiality of the participating companies.

Cross-case analysis, drawing on qualitative themes and the autonomy ratings, was used to discern patterns that could be used to distinguish among approaches or types of comprehensive EMOs (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As discussed below, this analysis resulted in the classification of companies into three general approaches.

General descriptions of companies[5]

The 15 companies interviewed for this study operated between 3 and 70 charter schools each, with each EMO serving between 900 and over 30,000 students. Six companies were classified as "regional" (operating in only one state), while the remaining were "national companies" that operated in 3 to 17 states or the District of Columbia. Six of the 15 companies worked only with charter schools, while nine offered other education-related services, ranging

---

[4] These ratings follow a similar logic to those used by Wohlstetter and her colleagues to examine autonomy in state charter school legislation (Wohlstetter et al., 1995).

from operating other public or private schools (five companies) to providing specific services such as professional development.

The missions of the companies varied considerable. The most common mission or curricular emphasis was a rigorous, "traditional," or "back-to-basics" program with a focus on "high standards" for academic success. Specifically, three respondents said that their company uses the "Direct Instruction" curriculum and materials for at least a part of their educational framework. Three programs were aimed specifically at high school students who had not been succeeding in their previous schools or had already dropped out of school. Five respondents specifically mentioned "individualized learning," but the meaning of the term varied. Other themes included close attention to brain development, a focus on schools within the community, technology, "hands-on" learning, and close relationships with parents. Several companies relied heavily on prepackaged curriculum and educational programs, including "Success for All."

As discussed below, decision-making about the amount and source of professional development varied across companies. Some companies chose to provide professional development "as needed," while others had very prescribed programs in which all teachers participated. Ten companies had specific, intensive (2-4 week) summer programs for teachers newly hired by a school they operated; in six of these cases, continuing teachers also participated in the program. One company central office did not provide formal training, but rather worked on an "apprenticeship" model, where newly hired teachers were given up to three months of learning alongside a mentor prior to operating independently.

---

[5] Due to concerns about confidentiality, more specific description about the companies included are not provided.

Companies took quite different approaches to school-level assessments and pedagogy. Almost every person interviewed discussed state testing as an important form of assessment, but only some companies had particular classroom assessments that they expected or encouraged teachers to use. Similarly, while some EMOs had very specific ideas about instructional practices (ranging from highly prescriptive, scripted direct-instruction approaches to more constructivist, "teacher as facilitator" modes), other companies said little about specific pedagogical techniques to be used in classrooms.

Finally, companies also varied considerably in both the extent to which they prescribed a school structure and the specifics of that structure. The most common structure involved what company representatives described as a "strong principal" model. In most cases, this meant that the principal was given considerable discretion in terms of structuring school governance, including if and how to incorporate parents and teachers in formal and informal decision-making. Some educational frameworks, however, created specific roles for different stakeholders; two companies mandated a role for "teacher teams," and several formalized parental influence through parent organizations.

Analysis – Balancing Autonomy and Control

The challenge of balancing local school autonomy with a central office's "vision" for schools is well recognized by EMO staff. A representative of one small company cited the challenge of "making sure the leadership understands [the company vision] and is able to carry that on, while at the same time giving them the autonomy they want and need to have." The analysis found patterns of perceived company behavior in certain areas – especially those

involving the educational framework and governance structure – but less clear patterns in areas including hiring and budgeting.

Three Approaches to Educational Frameworks

Three general ways in which comprehensive management EMOs approach issues directly related to the educational framework, including the mission/vision of the schools, the curriculum, materials, instructional/pedagogical approaches, student assessment and school structure in the schools they operate, were identified. While the literature on SBM does not focus on governance as a part of the educational program, EMO central office staff often see them as closely intertwined. Most company representatives said that their organization had a single approach to issues of autonomy versus company influence (although relationships with particular schools likely vary within these patterns). However, in two companies, two distinct approaches were used; for these companies, the two approaches were separated in the analysis (see Tables 1 and 2), creating 17 approaches across 15 companies.[6]

Companies with an All-Purpose Approach

A small portion of the companies studied fell into the "all-purpose" category, where EMOs provide educational services, but on a "customer-driven" model; for example, a school may wish to select a new science curriculum, and the EMO provides assistance through researching available alternatives or identifying consultants who can assist. Of the fifteen companies studied, one provided only an "all-purpose" approach, while two others offered some schools these more flexible services while providing others with a more defined model. The all-

---

[6] Appendix A provides the codes used in Tables 1 and 2. The approaches for the companies with two modes are listed as Company 2A and 2B, and Company 3A and 3B.

purpose EMO sits somewhere between a truly comprehensive approach and a company that focuses on back office support.

All-purpose EMOs have no predetermined educational program and leave staff within each school to decide mission, curriculum, assessment strategies, instructional approach and professional development needs. In the words of one company representative (also cited above), "we can go in and assist a school in developing their own curriculum for a particular discipline…There is really no area that we can't assist them in, but, again, we sit back and wait until we are asked to do it as opposed to imposing it."

One representative from an all-purpose EMO contrasted his company with one that provides a complete framework: "They do everything, they have their own curriculum... so we are not like that at all… What we do is we provide business and personnel services to people who want to run charter schools and we don't particularly care too much about what philosophy they espouse."[7]

Companies with a Mixed-Autonomy Approach

Seven companies (or parts of companies) provide a "mixed model," where the educational program is prescribed in some areas, but quite flexible in others. The two companies that provide more than one approach offer some services in this category. For all but one of the seven, the general mission is consistent across schools (or the portion of schools included in this category). A staff member at one of these companies likened its central office function to a river:

---

[7] Companies included in the list were, to a certain extent, one's that identified themselves as providing "comprehensive management services." In the case of this particular company, some responses in the interview were consistent with the definition of comprehensive management, while others were somewhat inconsistent.

> We supply what might be characterized as the banks of the rivers. That is, here are some guidelines that are fairly permanent, but not immutable… The mission we also supply. And like a river – and the river's mission is get to the sea – the individual components of the river upon encountering an obstacle do not seek higher authority before figuring out how to get around the obstacle… What we do is try to give our people as much knowledge of the truths of the basic mission, and then, "You guys figure it out."

While these EMOs maintain a consistent mission across schools, they vary as to where they prescribe behavior and where they allow or encourage variation. The most flexible of these companies offers a particular framework for education and a small amount of professional development in that framework, but does not specify curriculum, assessments, or instructional approach. At times, the flexibility of the program has created tensions between the EMO and the boards of individual schools. A representative commented that one challenge was ensuring that school leaders followed the company's model, "while at the same time giving them the autonomy they want and need to have." Since the company central office must rely on individual schools to interpret the general mission without a more prescribed framework, there is more potential for them to shift away from it.

Another company does not require specific curriculum, materials, or assessments, but does have a very clearly defined mission that incorporates explicit ideas about student learning and school governance. For this company's schools, professional development is at the core of the educational framework. As a company representative described it, "We provide continuous training, really. Most Friday afternoons are free for training every week in every school. We have intensive week-long training three times throughout the school year." At the start of the year, she added, "we have opportunities for selected staff to visit other schools to receive specialty training." This focus on training is combined with a well-defined structure for democratic school governance.

At the more fixed end of the "mixed-autonomy" spectrum, one company central office does not prescribe a particular curriculum or the use of specific materials, but does have an intensive assessment system that monitors student learning.

> We don't get into the minutia of what they're doing on a day-to-day basis, but through quizzes, tests, lessons, standardized tests, assessment programs, we know exactly how the kids are doing and we hold the teacher accountable for the performance of the student…We have a very sophisticated software program that allows us to monitor student performance on a daily basis.

For this company, the focus is on outcomes, rather than processes. The curriculum varies between schools, but the assessments are used as the primary tool for ensuring consistency across sites.

In each of these cases, companies have determined that providing autonomy in some areas – whether it be curriculum and materials, assessments, or professional development – but not others, allows individual schools to "personalize" an educational vision while still maintaining some "corporate identify."

Companies with a High-Influence Approach

Representatives of seven EMOs described a management approach that involved true "soup-to-nuts" management, with program designs that included the mission, curriculum, assessments, instructional approaches, professional development, and school organization. While each of these companies offers what they consider a focused program, the content and styles of the frameworks vary.

The most highly structured educational approaches incorporate very specific ideas about how a school can best succeed academically. Still, EMOs varied as to the amount of decision-making they encouraged at the classroom level, with EMOs that relied on very teacher-directed

approaches being more likely to minimize teacher decisions. One representative argued that, for her company, "There's total quality control…which comes of implementing the exact same approach and curriculum… all things considered, you can go from one school to the next and essentially see the same type of program in place." Another spokesperson said that, "we have a fairly structured notion of what we think makes for an outstanding educational experience and there's not a lot of deviation around that." In cases where the approach of the company is independent study, very specific materials and curriculum for courses – developed centrally or purchased "off-the-shelf" – provide this type of focus. In other cases, programs such as "Success for All" or "Direct Instruction" are used to provide consistency across school sites.

One important difference between most "high-influence" and "mixed-autonomy" EMOs is the emphasis on very specific approaches to instruction. In some cases, particularly with companies that focus on a "back-to-basics" approach, the purpose of this specificity is to "teacher proof" the educational program, as exemplified by these statements from representatives of two different companies:

> If you just openly… create an environment where individuals are expected to be creative in how they implement something, then you're essentially surrendering or risking the possibility that a particular school will either succeed or fail depending on the ability of that particular group of individuals. So it's -- we try to make it individual free, if you will. Or try to minimize the risk that a bad team could screw things up.
>
> So very simply, we believe that with our population [of mostly minority, urban students] that at the primary grade levels, an inventive, creative teacher is a disaster. Because that assumes the kids have a minimum level of academic skills upon which you can build the creativity.

Not all of the high-influence companies adopt this particular viewpoint. However, they all do see themselves as creating educational frameworks that – with proper training and careful hiring – can be "scaled up" in ways that do not rely heavily on the skills or propensities of specific individuals.

Assessment is another tool for developing consistency across sites. In some cases, high-influence EMOs rely heavily on tests provided with prepackaged programs. Other companies have developed their own assessments that can be administered as often as weekly; one representative noted that, "we can test kids weekly on what they've learned for that week. And we're able to pinpoint exactly where particular gaps may be forming." EMOs that rely on independent study have assessments built into the materials that students complete.

High-influence EMOs also see professional development as essential, particularly to introduce and maintain fidelity to the educational framework. In each of these companies, new teachers (and sometimes continuing teachers) participate in extensive training prior to operating independently; this mostly occurs in summer programs, but one company uses an extensive "apprenticeship" model.

While such formal professional development programs continue throughout the year, these EMOs also rely on more informal approaches – including curriculum support staff in schools who observe classes and review assessments, and gatherings of school leaders and/or staff across school sites. One person interviewed argued that such meetings can be more effective than traditional professional development conferences; he said that, for teachers,

> The interesting thing about [our inter-school meetings], and how that's different from the typical professional development conference, is that people come together not only around their subject area but around a common program… They all have the same kind of issues or problems and they know that when they go back home, they're gonna be trying to improve a program with a principal who understands what they're trying to do.

Overall, high-influence EMOs are more likely than other companies to have given some attention to the governance structure within individual schools. One respondent said that, for his company, "We have a very clear understanding of the management of the schools." One example of prescribed governance involves the role of school leaders; all seven of these

companies had particular ideas about the role of the school leader in one of their schools. In two companies, school leaders (sometimes but not always called principals) are viewed as administrative leaders, and there is another formal role or roles for educational leaders within the school structure. Two other companies focus on more collaborative governance; one respondent reported that his company expects principals to act "in an open, collegial, consulting way so that decisions will not be arbitrarily made." The remaining three companies explicitly espouse a "strong principal" model. One company representative argued that this is important for accountability purposes: "if you want to attract people who are willing to be held to those standards, then… you have to give them broad discretion with respect to staffing and budgeting and program supervision or you're tying their hands." Governance extends beyond the role of the principal, and five of the seven high-influence companies specify other structures, ranging from leadership teams to required committees to student government.

Autonomy in fiscal and hiring decisions

Two areas identified as critical to school autonomy in the SBM literature – budgeting/ fiscal control and personnel hiring – are either quite similar across EMOs, or vary in ways only somewhat related to the programmatic framework. The high-influence companies tend to have more overall control in these areas, but prioritize different decisions. Table 2 summarizes the findings in these areas.

Fiscal issues

Two of the most prominent fiscal issues for charter schools are determining the overall school budget and deciding how to finance the school's facility. Interviewees cited three basic approaches to school budgeting: writing the budget at the school level (perhaps with some

suggestions by the EMO); writing it as a "collaborative effort" between school personnel and the company, with the board and/or principal actively involved in ensuring that the budget reflected fiscal priorities; and having the EMO take the primary role in creating a budget that would then need to be approved by the local board. The most common approach (11 out of 15 companies) was the last, described by one respondent as "we draft a budget [to be] presented to the board as a recommendation that they approve or disapprove. But they're not crafting the budget."

Where budgeting is described as a more collaborative effort, it is difficult to determine how much influence each actor has in the process. One respondent reported that boards, as they become more accustomed to working with budgets, also become more assertive, even hiring separate accountants to review the budget. Only one company gave its schools primary authority over creating their budget. One of the "mixed autonomy" EMOs said that schools had control over their budgets within company guidelines: "They make a case for what they want to do, how they want to do it and if it can be managed within their budget, they have the latitude to do it... we are not so participative that we are going to let them do something we think is innately stupid, but rarely is that going to happen."

Once the budget is made, the discretionary spending at the school level also varies. While some companies report that schools have some budgetary control throughout the year, others argue that there is little discretionary money to be spent at any level. According to one interviewee, discretionary money is raised in their schools in ways similar to other public schools: "Fund raising, picture days, book fairs. Whatever money they raise that way reverts back to the school to spend anyway they want."

As noted earlier, the issue of acquiring (and often renovating) appropriate facilities is a significant challenge for charter schools. One of the attractions of EMOs is that they can often

provide assistance in this area, by providing capital, purchasing buildings or land, building new facilities, or arranging financing. Of the EMOs studied here, six did not purchase any facilities (although, in some cases, they did help to arrange financing). In three cases, the company (or an affiliated company) owned or leased all of the buildings used by the managed schools. In the remaining cases, there was a mix of situations for each company. Two representatives noted that short-term ownership by the EMO was more common than long-term because of concerns about limiting the availability of capital for other purposes. As one interviewee put it,

> For [the company] to actually own a facility on a long-term basis is pretty unusual. We might do that temporarily to get a facility bought and fixed and open, but we will almost immediately look to finance it or to sell it and then lease it back ourselves because we don't want to be in the real estate business with our capital tied up in buildings.

On one hand, EMO ownership of facilities allows schools access to buildings that might otherwise be unavailable to them. On the other hand, EMO ownership raises concerns about school autonomy, especially the ability of schools to end a relationship with a company (Horn & Miron, 2000; Molnar, 2001). One company representative (whose company owns some facilities) cited cases where charter boards have decided to take on ownership of their buildings:

> I think that's a very strong statement. If they own the building, if they decide to fire us at some point, they've got the building, they're in a much stronger position. And in some ways, that's better for us 'cause it's a very good answer to the charge that the charter groups are just straw groups that do our bidding.

Once a facility is acquired, there also can be continuing tensions around its use. One respondent described a difficult situation where school stakeholders resisted the company's plan to expand the school enrollment and reduce the amount of space available for "extra" activities.

Personnel

In the literature on site-based management, control over hiring is often seen as central to school-level autonomy. Hiring of teaching staff is one area where – with the exception of one

company – school-level staff (especially the principal) have a moderate to significant amount of influence; this is true across all three approaches to comprehensive management of education. While the EMO central office is often involved in recruiting candidates, and in some cases doing initial screening, most companies allow school staff to take an active role in the selection of new teachers. Also, in many cases, the board of the charter school makes the final decision about teacher hiring.

Perhaps not surprisingly, EMO staff consistently demonstrated much more concern about the selection of school leaders than the selection of teachers. This reflects a widely held belief that, as one company representative put it, the principal "is the most important job on the campus, without any question." EMOs want school leaders to share the company's vision of schooling and to act on this vision and its components when making decisions about such issues as hiring staff, professional development, and budgeting. Some companies maintain a high level of control of principal selection, screening candidates and recommending one for board approval, if required. Others attempt to strike a balance with the school, focusing on selecting a leader in keeping with the needs and philosophy of the company. As one representative described the process:

> nobody can get to be the principal unless both the charter board and the [company] are thumbs up on that person. In terms of the charter board, they've got the authority and the ultimate accountability for the school. Plus it's their community and it's their kids. We're making a substantial investment and it's our reputation. So neither one of us can be in the position of having to accept a principal sort of over our better judgement.

She went onto argue that charter board participation in the principal selection process as an important factor in local support for the school: "I don't think it's right to expect the board not to have a say. And frankly, it's the board that lends local legitimacy to what we do. We can quickly

be painted as folks from out of town. So it's very important I think for the principal to have credibility and for the school to have a good standing in the community."

For both personnel and fiscal issues, EMOs were willing to vary the level of input from schools – including giving more control over areas that school districts have traditionally dominated (especially teacher hiring), as long as the overall goal was consistent with the company's purposes – both financial and educational.

Discussion and directions for the future

The ability of stakeholders in an individual charter school to make decisions about operations in that school varies across a host of issues, including specific components of the educational program, governance, organization, hiring practices and fiscal issues. For charter schools, many states offer a legal structure that theoretically provides them with considerable control in many of these areas. However, for those schools that work with educational management organizations, the level of autonomy in each area may shift control away from the school site. From the perspective of EMO central office staff, specifics of school autonomy vary considerably between companies, even among EMOs that fall into the category of "comprehensive management." Company staff view the removal of some autonomy as critical to developing quality charter schools, and often, to maintaining fidelity to EMO ideals.

While the original charter school concept placed a strong emphasis on autonomy as a critical predecessor to innovation, there are still many questions to be answered about how much autonomy, and in what areas, seem most related to some understanding of school quality. Beliefs about that autonomy "mix" are quite different from the perspectives of those interviewed

for this study, although all believe that an outside organization can provide some level of valuable guidance and assistance to charter schools that might otherwise be more isolated.

A number of areas are ripe for future research. The next phase of this project involves site visits to schools operated by each approach to education, and comparing perceptions of central office staff to those of various stakeholders at the school level. This will address one of the important limitations of this paper – that it relies largely on the reports of people working directly for EMO central offices. Other work in this area (both qualitative and quantitative) might look not only at autonomy but also at internal school structures, the role of different decision-makers at a school site, and the content and outcomes of different EMOs' educational programs. Another ripe area for research is comparing implementation of EMO models with experiences in non-EMO operated charter schools, and with other types of schools (charters and district-run) that are attempting to follow a "whole school" model – especially those adopting school designs. Interviews with EMO staff reveal only the intentions of program designers, and are limited in their ability to provide information about fidelity to the model in the classroom. This can help to address another area not covered in this study – the differences between schools that operate with and without EMO involvement.

One of the goals of the charter school movement was to allow for increased innovation at the school level, with both autonomy and accountability offering opportunities and pressure for change (Nathan, 1996). From the perspective of EMO central office staff, there is a need to limit that autonomy in a variety of ways if companies are to offer multiple schools with consistent offerings and of consistent quality, and maintain some control over school spending. The "success" of the different ways in which EMOs have sought to balance company control and school autonomy is an open question.

Bibliography

Arsen, D., Plank, D., & Sykes, G. (1999). *School choice policies in Michigan: The rules matter* . East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

Briggs, K. L., & Wohlstetter, P. (1999). *Key elements of a successful school-bsed management strategy* (Working paper http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/publications/briggsandwohlstetter1999.pdf). Los Angeles: Center on Education Governance, University of Southern California.

Budde, R. (1989). Education by charter. *Phi Delta Kappan, March*, 518-520.

Bulkley, K. (2001). Educational performance and charter school authorizers: The accountability bind. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 9*(37), http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v9n37.html.

David, J. L. (1995). The who, what, and why of site-based management. *Educational Leadership, 53*(4).

Dykgraaf, C., & Lewis, S. (1998). For-profit charter schools: What the public needs to know. *Educational Leadership*(October), 51-53.

Elmore, R. (1993). School decentralization: Who gains? Who loses? In J. Hannaway & M. Carnoy (Eds.), *Decentralization and School Improvement* . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Furtwengler, C. (1998). Heads up! The EMOs are coming. *Educational Leadership*(October), 44-47.

Hannaway, J. (1999). *Contracting as a mechanism for managing education services* (Policy Brief RB-28). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Hill, P., Lake, R., Celio, M. B., Campell, C., Herdman, P., & Bulkley, K. (2001). *A study of charter school accountability* . Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington.

Hill, P., Pierce, L., & Guthrie, J. (1997). *Reinventing Public Education : How Contracting Can Transform America's Schools (RAND Research Study)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Horn, J., & Miron, G. (2000). *An evaluation of the Michigan charter school initiative: Performance, accountability, and impact* . Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

Kolderie, T. (1990). *Beyond Choice to New Public Schools: Withdrawing the Exclusive Franchise in Public Education* (8). Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute.

Lin, M., & Hassel, B. (1999). *Charting a Clear Course: A Resource Guide for Charter Schools Contracting with School Management Organizations* . Minneapolis: Center for Policy Studies.

Lyons, J. (1995). Contracting out for public school support services. *Education and Urban Society, 27*(2), 154-167.

Marks, H. M., & Louis, K. S. (1997). Does teacher empowerment affect the classroom? The implications of teacher empowerment for instructinoal practice and student academic performance. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis, 19*(3).

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Molnar, A. (2001). Calculating the benefits and costs of for-profit public education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 9*(15).

Molnar, A., Morales, J., & Wyst, A. V. (2000). *Profiles of for-profit education management companies, 2000-2001* . Milwaukee, Wis.: Center for Education Research, Analysis, and Innovation, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Nathan, J. (1996). *Charter schools: Creating hope and opportunity for American education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Newmann, F. M. (1996). *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pack, J. R. (1987). Privatization of public-sector services in theory and practice. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 6*(4).

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods.* (Vol. Second Edition). Newbury Park: Sage.

Rhim, L. (1998, April). *Franchising public education: A study of the linkage of charter schools and private education management companies in Massachusetts.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Richards, C., Sawicky, M., & Shore, R. (1996). *Risky business: Private management of public schools.* Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

RPP International. (2000). *The state of charter schools: 2000* . Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Schnaiberg, L. (1999, December 1). Entrepreneurs hoping to do good, make money. *Education Week.*

Scott, J. (2001). *Reinventing Urban School Governance: Privatization, Decentralization and Charter School Reform* (Unpublished dissertation). Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles.

SRI International. (2000). *Evaluation of the public charter schools program: Year one evaluation report* . Washington, DC: SRI International.

Starr, P. (1989). The meaning of privatization. In S. Kamerman & A. Kahn (Eds.), *Privatization and the welfare state* . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Symonds, W., Palmer, A., Lindorff, D., & McCann, J. (2000, February 7). For-Profit Schools: They're Spreading Fast. Can Private Companies do a Better Job of Educating America's Kids? *Business Week.*

Walsh, M. (1999, November 24). Ka-ching! Businesses cashing in on learning. *Education Week.*

Weiss, C., & Cambone, J. (1994). Principals, shared decision making, and school reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 16*(3).

Wells, A. S., & others. (1998). *Beyond the rhetoric of charter school reform: A study of ten California school districts* . Los Angeles: UCLA Charter School Study.

Wohlstetter, P., & Griffin, N. (1998). *Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities: Early Lessons from Charter Schools* (OP-03). Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Wohlstetter, P., Mohrman, S., & Robertson, P. (1997). Successful school-based management: A lesson for restructuring urban schools. In D. Ravitch & J. Viteritti (Eds.), *New schools for a new century* . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wohlstetter, P., Wenning, R., & Briggs, K. L. (1995). Charter schools in the United States: The question of autonomy. *Educational Policy, 9*(4), 331-358.

Table 1: School influence on educational program and school structure[8]

	School influence on mission	School influence on curriculum	School influence on classroom assessment	School influence on instruction	School influence on school governance/ organizational structure	School influence on professional development
<u>All-Purpose EMOs</u>						
Company 1	High	High	High	High	High	High
Company 2A	High	High	High	High	High	High
Company 3A	High	High	High	High	High	High
<u>Mixed-Autonomy EMOs</u>						
Company 3B	Low	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
Company 4	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium
Company 5	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	Medium
Company 2B	Low	Medium	High	Low	High	Low
Company 6	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low
Company 7	Low	Low	High	Low	Medium	Low
Company 8	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
<u>High-Influence EMOs</u>						
Company 9	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
Company 10	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Company 11	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low
Company 12	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low
Company 13	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Company 14	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Company 15	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

[8] "School" includes the staff, parents and students at a particular site, as well as the charter school's board.

Table 2: School influence over fiscal and personnel issues[9]

	School influence on school budget	School control of facilities	School influence on teacher hiring	School influence on principal selection
All-Purpose EMOs				
Company 1	Low	High	Medium	Medium
Company 2A	Low	High	High	Medium
Company 3A	Medium	High	High	Medium
Mixed-Autonomy EMOs				
Company 3B	Low	Medium	High	Low
Company 4	High	High	High	Medium
Company 5	Low	High	Medium	Medium
Company 2B	Low	High	Medium	Medium
Company 6	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
Company 7	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Company 8	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
High-Influence EMOs				
Company 9	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
Company 10	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Company 11	Low	Medium	High	Low
Company 12	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Company 13	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Company 14	Low	Low	Medium	Low
Company 15	Low	Medium	High	Low

[9] "School" includes the staff, parents and students at a particular site, as well as the charter school's board.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix A: Rating system used in Tables 1 and 2

Codes used in Table 1

School influence on mission
High = Mission determined primarily by school
Low = mission determined primarily by EMO

School influence on curriculum
High = little influence
Medium = company provides standards but not curriculum/basic guidelines and standards
Low = company provides specific curriculum and materials

School influence on classroom assessments
High = assessments in addition to standardized or state tests
Low = assessments in addition to standardized or state assessments provided by company

School influence on instruction/pedagogical approaches
High = minimal influence
Medium = some influence
Low = specific instructional approach required/strongly encouraged

School influence on school governance/organizational structure
High = no organizational or governance structure recommended or required by company
Medium = suggested structure for either governance or organization
Low = clearly stated structure for either governance or organization

School influence on professional development
High = School primarily determines professional development needs and selects providers
Medium = Mix of school and EMO determined needs and provider selection
Low = EMO primarily determines professional development needs and selects providers

Codes used in Table 2
School influence on school budget
High = Board primarily with some EMO advice
Medium = EMO and board jointly
Low = EMO designs - gets board approval

School ownership of facilities
High = EMO does not own/lease any facilities
Medium = Mix of school and EMO ownership/leasing
Low = EMO owns/leases most of the facilities

School influence on teacher hiring
High = School staff/board primarily responsible for teacher selection
Medium = School staff/board and EMO jointly select teachers
Low = EMO primarily responsible for teacher selection

School influence on principal selection
High = School staff/board primarily responsible for principal selection
Medium = School staff/board and EMO jointly select principal
Low = EMO primarily responsible for staff selection

TM034455

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Balancing Act: Educational Management Organizations and Charter School Autonomy	
Author(s): Katrina Bulkley	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: April, 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☒

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: [signature]	Printed Name/Position/Title: Prof. Katrina Bulkley	
Organization/Address: Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 10 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901	Telephone: 732-932-7496 x8150	FAX: 732-932-6803
	E-Mail Address: bulkley@rci.rutgers.edu	Date: 8/22/02

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org